

HAGERSVILLE UNITED CHURCH &
SPINGVALE UNITED CHURCH
SUNDAY, MAY 3rd, 2020

Ministry of Caring: The Whole People of God
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2 All your works with joy surround you,
earth and heaven reflect your rays,
stars and angels sing around you,
centre of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
flowery meadow, flashing sea,
chanting bird and flowing fountain,
sound their praise eternally.

3 You are giving and forgiving,
ever blessing, ever blest,
wellspring of the joy of living,
ocean depth of happy rest!
Source of grace and fount of blessing,
let your light upon us shine;
teach us how to love each other,
lift us to the joy divine.

4 Mortals join the mighty chorus
which the morning stars began;
God's own love is reigning o'er us,
joining people hand in hand.
Ever singing, march we onward,
victors in the midst of strife;
joyful music leads us sunward
in the triumph song of life.

.....
REGIONAL COUNCIL PRAYER CYCLE

Jarvis-Garnet

“Sheep Need a Shepherd”

Jesus was called the Good Shepherd because he called himself the good shepherd in the Gospel of John. His claim to this title is not casual by any means. In fact, Jesus' claim to be the Good Shepherd has meaning that is both deep and wide. In the old testament David claims loud and Clear The Lord is My Shepherd. A psalm of caring trusting and understanding God.

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: The God of all shepherds has called us here.

P: We come today, celebrating God's love for us.

L: The Good Shepherd has given his life for us.

P: We come today, thanking Jesus for his witness and his teaching

L: The Shepherding Spirit moves through us, bringing us new hope.

P: We come today ready to celebrate and to praise God.

OPENING HYMN: #232 Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee

1 Joyful, joyful we adore you,
God of glory, life and love;
hearts unfold like flowers before you,
opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness,
drive the gloom of doubt away;
giver of immortal gladness,
fill us with the light of day.

OPENING PRAYER

Thank you, loving God, for bringing us to this time of worship. Refresh us and heal us again. Remind us of the many ways in which you have blessed our lives with your abundant love and your presence. Guide our hearts and our spirits that we may hear your words and our souls may be stirred into active service to your people. In the name of the Good Shepherd, who leads us to life, we pray. AMEN.

CHILDREN'S TIME AND CHILDREN'S SONG (IF YOU ARE ABLE TO VIEW ONLINE)

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

We grumble and complain about our daily lot in life. We read the newspapers, watch the broadcast news and think (sometimes outload) when will this end. And we wonder, "Where are you, O God?" We throw our hands up in the air and act as though we are defeated. And we cry, "Why isn't God taking care of all this?"

Forgive us, patient Lord. Forgive us when we could have done something to help someone else. Forgive us when we, by our attitudes and language, our thoughts and actions, have gone against your will. You are with us, Lord. You lead us daily in right paths and offer to us the bread of life. You stand with us in these times, giving us your abundant love. And then you offer to us a place in your eternal home. How can we doubt your presence? Help us to trust you. Help us to praise you and remember that you have called us to be your witnesses and workers in this world. Give us strength and courage, joy and peace for all the work that you have for us to do. In the name of Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, who laid down his life for us, his sheep, we pray. AMEN.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

In the midst of all that you fear, God is with you. God will not abandon you. Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, laid down his life for you and offers you hope and peace. AMEN.

***CHORUS: #91 "GREAT ARE YOU, LORD"**

Holy Lord, Most Holy Lord, you alone are worthy of my praise,

O Holy Lord, Most Holy Lord, with all of my heart I sing:

Great are You, Lord, worthy of praise;

Holy and true, great are You, Lord, Most Holy Lord. (X 2)

SCRIPTURE READINGS

John 10:11-18 New International Version (NIV)

¹¹ "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹² The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away.

Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. ¹³ The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

¹⁴ "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. ¹⁷ The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."

Psalm 23 Living Bible (TLB)

23 Because the Lord is my Shepherd, I have everything I need!

²⁻³ He lets me rest in the meadow grass and leads me beside the quiet streams. He gives me new strength. He helps me do what honors him the most.

⁴ Even when walking through the dark valley of death I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me, guarding, guiding all the way.^[a]

⁵ You provide delicious food for me in the presence of my enemies. You have welcomed me as your guest;^[b] blessings overflow!

⁶ Your goodness and unfailing kindness shall be with me all of my life, and afterwards I will live with you forever in your home.

MESSAGE - Sheep, Shepherd's Leadership

When I look at all that has changed about our lives and the world; when I acknowledge the uncertainties of our future; when I read the statistics of cases and deaths of the Covid 19; when I think about those who are losing jobs or income; when I wonder how long it will before we again greet each other with hugs, kisses, and handshakes — I don't want more information or answers about COVID-19. And I don't want more instructions on what to do or not do.

I want to hear words of hope..... and that is what I have been trying to convey to all of you in the last couple of weeks. Words of hope and comfort. I want to be reminded that "the Lord is my shepherd" and "I shall not be in want." I want to be reassured that the Lord is the Good Shepherd and all shall be well.

And so today we are going to reflect on Sheep and the Shepherd....

First of all let's look at a sheep's behaviour.

Sheep have a strong flocking instinct. They feel safer when gathered together. Sheep need each other sheep to feel safe. Separating one sheep out from the rest of the flock is disturbing and frightening to them. Sheep have strong Family Bonds. Sheep will stay in maternal groups for life. Knowing a couple that raised sheep and when they lived in this area we would spend Sundays with them. Dave would often explain that he would see family groups grazing and sleeping together in the field. One time, he had separated a set of twins (ram and ewe) at weaning time. They both remained on our farm but in different fields and paddocks.

After two years of separation, he put the two siblings back in the same field. The ram immediately walked over to his sister and they stood nose to nose for 30 minutes. Clearly, they knew who each other was and were glad to be back together again.

Also, Sheep will follow a leader. If you can get one sheep moving, then the rest will most likely follow. Leaders tend to be the most dominant sheep in the flock. Sheep will also follow someone they trust and know. Sheep run when frightened. Quick movements, loud noises, and dogs, will all put sheep on the run. When approaching sheep, it is best to move slowly and talk softly.

Sheep rely heavily on their vision. With their eyes set on the sides of their heads, their field of vision is quite broad. They are constantly scanning the field as they graze looking for predators and others around them. But, a sheep can be caught by sneaking up from behind.

Yet the fact remains that of all the creatures that God ever created, sheep are among the least intelligent. The size of their brain in proportion to the rest of their body is quite small.

And that is why sheep need a Shepherd.

Shepherds lead, protect, defend, nurture, and comfort when fear panics the flock.

"I am the good shepherd," Jesus told His followers in a context that brought them into direct confrontation with His claims to have come from God and His intention to find the lost sheep, lead them to the green pastures of heaven, bring them to the still waters of cleansing and refreshment, and ultimately give them the joy of everlasting life.

The writer of the book of Hebrews calls Jesus, "The Great Shepherd." Peter calls Him, "The Chief Shepherd." And in today passage from John, Jesus states "I am the good Shepherd."

You know, the more you ponder the parallels between sheep and people, the more you see the importance of knowing the Shepherd, the one who leads you through the valley of the shadow of death, who has been there and has come up on the other side saying, "Follow me!"

For in today's world, we often see leaders ... shepherds who look out for their own interests at the expense of their "sheep."

God expects a higher standard from his leaders, his shepherds. Shepherds are to be people of integrity who care deeply about the needs of their flock. Leaders need to take seriously the words of Jesus who said the two greatest commandments were to love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength and to love your neighbor as yourself.

The most important thing the shepherd does is to come looking for the lost sheep to lead us back to safety. Now more than ever, if you find yourself identifying with one who has wandered far from the fold, wondering if the shepherd is there.... lift up your soul and cry, "Lord, here I am! God, come and lead me home" and He'll be there. Jesus is the one who will support you, listen to your prayers, understand when things seem overwhelming and give you hope for today, tomorrow and for all days to come.

Remember to ... Stick close to Jesus. Just like the sheep stick close to their shepherd. Trust that He knows the way through this valley and will see you safely through. Believe that He has good reasons for taking this route, even though it is hard and unfamiliar.

And hold on to the truth that there is something better waiting on the other side of this valley. Amen

HYMN: PSALM 23 PG. 747

1 The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want;
 he makes me down to lie
 in pastures green; he leadeth me,
 the quiet waters by.

- 2 My soul he doth restore again;
and me to walk doth make
within the paths of righteousness,
even for his own name's sake.
- 3 Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,
yet will I fear no ill;
for thou art with me; and thy rod
and staff me comfort still.
- 4 My table thou has furnished
in presence of my foes;
my head thou dost with oil anoint,
and my cup overflows.
- 5 Goodness and mercy all my life
shall surely follow me,
and in God's house for evermore
my dwelling-place shall be.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Our souls are weary, O God. We hear to easily the loud clamor of the world. We witness the fear all around us. We long for the "past" when life seemed so much safer and simpler; when we felt cherished and protected. In this spirit, we have come to this time of worship, seeking your peace and hope. The Psalmist wrote of green pastures and refreshing springs of water, places of rest. Offerings of quietness and comfort flood our thirsting souls. What we would give for such places in the heart! In the midst of all that is difficult, there is one who leads us to these places where, when we have gathered strength and healing, we are prepared to go forth in confidence to serve again. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, knows our name and our needs. He listens for our cries and responds in love. We can have great assurance in that. We offered today the names and situations of illness, mourning, stress, and concern which touch our lives and our souls. We have breathed our heart's desire for their healing and restoration. God's abundant love shall flood over them until they are more than filled. God will be with all these dear ones in their situations and needs. And God will be with us, strengthening us,

restoring us, healing us, challenging us, to witness to the Good News of Salvation in the name of Jesus Christ. Open our hearts this day, O Lord, and enter into our lives. In Jesus' name, we pray. AMEN.

LORD'S PRAYER

CLOSING HYMN: #635 All The Way My Saviour Leads Me

- 1 All the way my Saviour leads me;
what have I to ask beside?
Can I doubt his tender mercy
who through life has been my guide?
Heavenly peace, divinest comfort,
here by faith in him to dwell,
for I know, whate'er befall me,
Jesus doeth all things well.
- 2 All the way my Saviour leads me,
cheers each winding path I tread,
gives me grace for every trial,
feeds me with the living bread.
Though my weary steps may falter,
and my soul athirst may be,
gushing from the rock before me,
lo, a spring of joy I see!
- 3 All the way my Saviour leads me;
O the fullness of his love!
Perfect rest to me is promised
in my Father's house above.
When my spirit, clothed, immortal,
wings its flight to realms of day,
this my song through endless ages,
'Jesus led me all the way!'

SENDING FORTH

The Good Shepherd leads us forward, from this place, into the world to serve God's people, to witness to God's love in all that we do. Go in peace and God's peace will go with you. AMEN.

CHORAL AMEN

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No school shootings,
TRAFFIC is gone,
GAS is affordable,
BILLS extended.

KIDS are at home with their FAMILIES.

PARENTS are home taking care of their CHILDREN.

FAST FOOD replaced by HOME COOKED MEALS.

Hectic SCHEDULES replaced by NAPS, REST, and
RELAXATION.

The AIR seems CLEANER.

The WORLD quieter.

PEOPLE are conscious about HYGIENE and HEALTH.

MONEY doesn't seem to make the WORLD GO ROUND
anymore.

DOCTORS, NURSES & TEACHERS are being praised and
recognized instead of athletes and celebrities.

And WE now have TIME, finally,
to STOP and SMELL the ROSES.

The positive side above all!!

God's way of telling us to slow down and focus on HIM and
what is important!!